

(Washington, D.C.) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today introduced the Anthrax Attacks Investigation Act of 2009, legislation that would establish a Congressional commission to investigate the 2001 anthrax attacks and the federal government's response to and investigation of the attacks. The bipartisan commission would make recommendations to the President and Congress on how the country can best prevent and respond to any future bioterrorism attack. The attacks evidently originated from a postal box in Holt's Central New Jersey congressional district, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of many of his constituents. Holt has consistently raised questions about the federal investigation into the attacks.

"All of us – but especially the families of the victims of the anthrax attacks – deserve credible answers about how the attacks happened and whether the case really is closed," Holt said. "The Commission, like the 9/11 Commission, would do that, and it would help American families know that the government is better prepared to protect them and their children from future bioterrorism attacks."

Under Holt's legislation, the commission would be comprised of no more than six members from the same political party. The commission would hold public hearings, except in situations where classified information would be discussed. The commission would have to consult the National Academies of Sciences for recommendations on scientific staff to serve on the Commission. The Commission's final report would be due 18 months after the Commission begins operations.

"Myriad questions remain about the anthrax attacks and the government's bungled response to the attacks," Holt said. "One of the most effective oversight mechanisms we can employ to get answers to those questions is a 9/11 style Commission."

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